

# 2000 Environmental Quality Incentives Program



## Rhode Island Summary

### Overview

This year, Rhode Island experienced its first drop in funds obligated to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts since the program began 4 years ago. While interest in the program remains high, farmers applied for fewer dollars than in the past. Many farmers that applied requested deferral until next year when it is anticipated that the program will be expanded to allow for cost share on water conservation practices statewide. In total, 19 landowners applied for EQIP in FY 2000. Of those, NRCS assisted nine landowners in developing conservation plans and contracts, obligating nearly \$155,000 in Federal cost-share assistance.

### Accomplishments

Rhode Island has 43 active EQIP contracts. They cover 3,675 acres and represent over \$770,000 in Federal cost-share assistance. Despite Rhode Island's small size, agriculture in the state is as diverse as in neighboring states. EQIP addresses problems that reflect that diversity. While over 700 farming operations are in Rhode Island, a state with just over 600,000 acres total, many farms are operated by producers who work fulltime off the farm. As such, NRCS works with its partners to develop EQIP in Rhode Island to meet the needs of both fulltime commercial farmers and the smaller hobby farms that are becoming more common. Natural resources have benefited by installing improved irrigation systems that conserve water, alternate sources of water for large volume irrigators that enhance riparian systems, and livestock waste management systems, fencing, nutrient management, and land application of manure to protect water quality.

### Customer Focus

Darrell Bouchard, Sr., and his family have operated Washington County Turf Farms for 41 years. Darrell has been actively involved with conservation programs throughout his tenure on the farm. He irrigates all of the 266 acres of turf fields they own. Much of that land is irrigated from water withdrawn directly from streams. These streams are also home to native brook trout. Irrigation water withdrawals are unregulated in Rhode Island, and as such, concern from the environmental community, fisherman, and canoeists using the rivers and streams prompted Darrell to investigate alternative water sources. He approached NRCS many years ago about installing high-yielding irrigation wells to replace instream withdrawals and encouraged USDA to consider allowing cost share for these new systems. Darrell was the first farmer to take advantage of this opportunity when cost share for wells became available in 1997 under the newly established EQIP. His well provides over 700 gallons per minute, and allows for a 3-week delay and an 80 percent reduction in direct impact to the streams. Darrell also follows an irrigation water management plan for all of the land they farm.

### Outlook

Rhode Island's agricultural community finds it increasingly more difficult to farm in a rapidly urbanizing environment. Programs like EQIP are important tools to these farmers as they adapt to pressures of farming on the fringe. Sustained funding for EQIP in Rhode Island would ensure their ability to meet these demands.

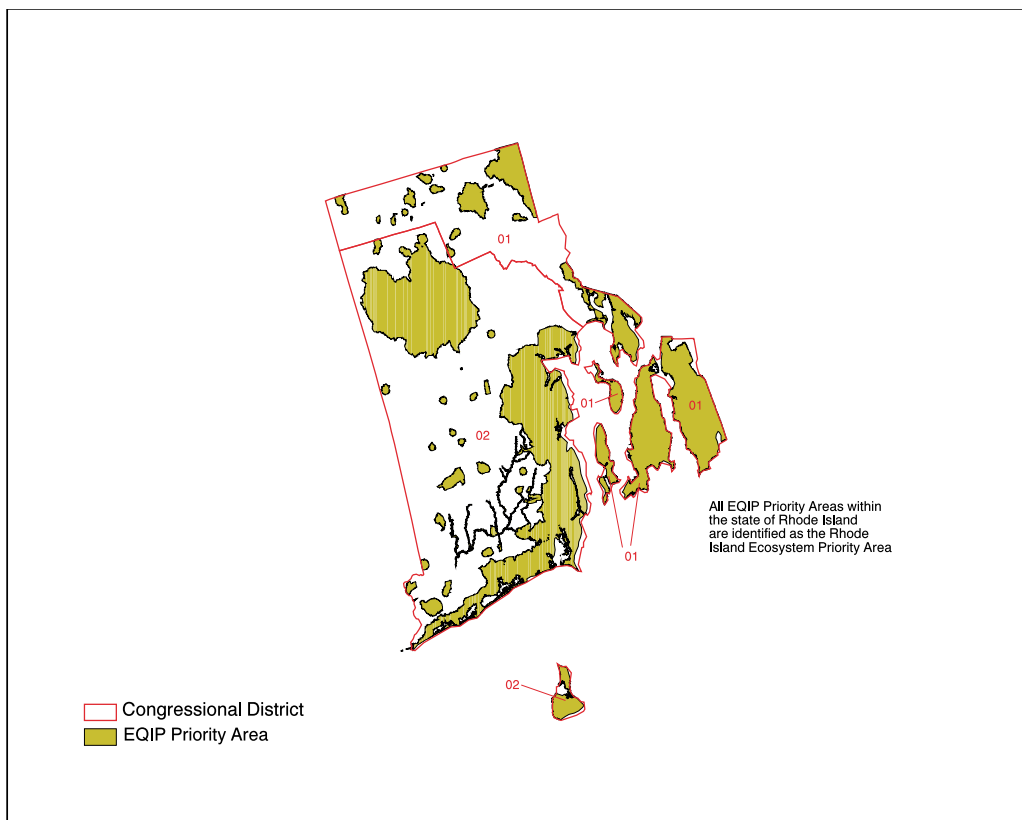
### State Contact

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*Darrell Bouchard, Sr.*



## Rhode Island EQIP Priority Areas Within Congressional Districts



## Rhode Island EQIP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2000		Cumulative Total (97-00)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$15,748	0	\$177,618	9
District 2	144,365	9	699,161	37
<b>State Totals</b>	<b>\$160,113</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>\$876,779</b>	<b>46</b>

Note: EQIP contracts for each Congressional District are estimated from Conservation Priority Areas, which may include more than one district.

Congressional District 0 = EQIP Contracts for Statewide Natural Resource Concerns, which can be in any Congressional District in the state.

Source: FSA Recordset type01, data through 4th quarter FY2000

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